



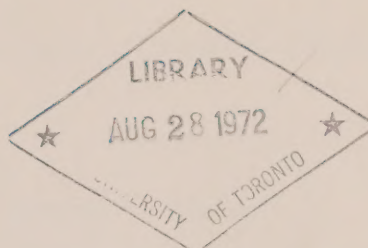
Participation and Liberal Democratic Government

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PARTICIPATION AND LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This study explores the issue of "participation" in the governance of Ontario, Canada. Readers may conclude the study is more theoretical than operational, even if it is intended to be both; indeed, we are beginning to recognize there is no practice without theory, and theory has no meaning in the absence of practice. As a pragmatic political issue, "participation" is becoming increasingly important to all western governments normally defined as "democratic." Given their proximity to large numbers of citizens who face identifiable social and economic problems, the issue is affecting most directly the governments of large urban communities. In a larger sense, however, we have yet to grasp the dimensions of the pragmatic issue; there seems underway a fundamental cultural revolution, a guiding precept of which is an almost total rejection of traditional concepts of "authority," as those apply to all organized human activities, including such disparate structures as labor unions, corporate management overheads, and athletic teams. Those "in charge" of such organizations are facing this "crisis of authority" without an adequate conceptual framework for coping with it; because nothing else is widely accepted yet, they fall back to the use of conventional frameworks and, often without consciously intending to do so, behave in ways that seem repressive to those at whom the behavior is directed. Thus, corporate managers almost welcome dips in the economy that lead to job shortages for junior executives; this makes it possible to publish new "codes" and "regulations" which severely limit permissible modes of dress and length of haircuts. This does not mean the managers are "evil"; it means, rather, that the theories which dominate our organized lives tend to encourage, if not compel, these forms of behavior.

"Participation" will be difficult to operationalize so long as we hew closely to the conventional theories and premises which underlie the functioning of all liberal democratic governments. This leads to an unsettling, but manageable, paradox. If one attempts to add "participation" to existing theories, the outcome may be analogous to what has happened in a number of famous organ transplant operations that have involved individual humans; the body (in this instance the body politic) undergoes tremendous structural upheaval, rejects the implanted organ and, perhaps, expires in the process. Yet if one even begins to look at existing institutions and processes in entirely different ways than heretofore, little or no structural change may be required at all, even if each individual (citizen, legislator, minister, administrator, businessman, worker) begins to view his or her role in a very new perspective. A "political", "administrative", or "economic" revolution, then, seems less important than an "intellectual" revolution, one that might enable all of us, by a fundamental act of mind and will, to leap into a new world where everyone and everything would behave differently while appearing to remain the same.

Such a revolution seems required both of those who perceive themselves as advocates of "participation" and those who oppose it; both sides, if anything so complex can have only two sides, tend to use conventional theories and language to describe their objectives. Many advocates seem trapped within the boundaries of some of the oldest theories imaginable. They seem to argue that they should replace the existing "establishment" and exercise the same power themselves, or that they should have a unilateral veto power over

all decisions, or that every individual should participate extensively in every aspect of every decision that has any actual or potential effect upon his or her life. There is no shortage of proposals for "open hearings" in huge auditoriums, for neoclassical forms of "Athenian" democracy, and for sophisticated and instantaneous referenda on all public issues, as in the oft-repeated suggestion that electronic home-voting consoles, attached perhaps to television sets, could enable everyone to record his or her vote on the "issue of the day". To opponents "participation" conjures up visions of mass mobilization and the excessively destructive behavior that accompanied the operationalization of Marxist and Rousseauian humanist theories in various political environments. This study cannot please attackers or defenders of conventional wisdom, and a summary statement of underlying premises seems in order.

A NEW THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IS EMERGING, ONE WHICH DEFINES "PARTICIPATION" AS THE CENTRAL RIGHT OF ALL CITIZENS. BY THIS IS MEANT THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE DESIGN AND POLICY PROCESSES OF ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH HE BELONGS AS WELL AS OTHER POLICY PROCESSES WHICH AFFECT HIS OR HER FUTURE, REGARDLESS OF FORMAL MEMBERSHIPS. VOTING, IN ANY FORM, DOES NOT MEET ANY MEANINGFUL DEFINITION OF "PARTICIPATION" AND, OVER TIME, ELECTORAL PROCESSES WILL DIMINISH IN IMPORTANCE. AS THIS INVOLVEMENT BECOMES AN ACKNOWLEDGED RIGHT, DEPRIVATION OF THAT RIGHT WILL BE PERCEIVED AS THE EQUIVALENT OF POLITICAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT. BECAUSE OF THE INCREASING INTERDEPENDENCE OF ALL ORGANIZED HUMAN ACTIVITY, THERE WILL BE A GRADUAL BLURRING, THEN PERHAPS ERASURE, OF EXISTING DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC, PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL, NATIONAL,

AND INTERNATIONAL FORMS OF ORGANIZATION. ALL ACTIVITIES IN ALL ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE SEEN AS POLITICAL IN NATURE, IN THAT THEY AFFECT THE FUTURE COURSE OF SOCIETY. THUS, NO ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE EXEMPT FROM A REQUIREMENT TO FUNCTION IN PARTICIPATIVELY DEMOCRATIC WAYS, THE SPECIFICS OF WHICH WE CANNOT AS YET UNDERSTAND, PREDICT IN DETAIL, OR DESIGN, EVEN IF WE CAN MAKE PLAUSIBLE JUDGEMENTS ON METHODS AND TECHNIQUES LIKELY TO FURTHER THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES. THE FUNDAMENTAL UNIT OF ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY AND ANALYSIS, SO IT SEEMS NOW, WILL BE A COLLEGIAL, NONHIERARCHICAL, FACE-TO-FACE PROBLEM-SOLVING GROUP LARGE ENOUGH TO INCLUDE THE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERTISE NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM AT HAND, BUT SMALL ENOUGH TO ASSURE EACH PARTICIPANT THAT HIS OR HER CONTRIBUTION IS SUBSTANTIAL, MEANINGFUL, AND INDISPENSABLE TO THE PROCESS.

Even in this stark form, the implications of the approach are enormous, and some will be outlined in Section IV of this study. The implications cut across widely known theories of politics, administration, and economics, and they may be more universal in application than is obvious at first glance. Those committed to socialist and capitalist **ideologies** are unlikely to immediately welcome them. Yet it is well to note that distinguished political theorists in the western democracies already have advocated that "workers' management," as practiced in Yugoslavia, be considered for adoption in the west, an indication that the search for operational norms is not confined to an examination of wholly conventional terrain (for reasons to be outlined later, this study does not

advocate experimentation along the lines of the Yugoslav experiment). Given the situation, we may be at the beginning of a great debate; we are not in a position, however, to postpone operational experiments until the debate is resolved. Theory and practice simply will have to evolve together and, at this stage, practice is ahead of theory. To initiate some "catching up," it is necessary to retrace briefly the theories that have been dominant up till now.

I. EXISTING THEORIES OF LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

The fact that many academics agree on the outline of the dominant theory of liberal democratic government does not mean that every individual in every western country subscribes to the theory. There is such an agreement, however, it includes academics from a number of western countries, and it seems equally applicable to all known forms of so-called democratic governance,¹ whether parliamentary or separation-of-powers in forms. Often termed the contemporary theory of democracy, its broad outlines are traceable to Joseph Schumpeter,² who propounded his theory in connection with a prediction that capitalism inevitably would give way to socialism in the western world; in a sense, he was arguing that socialism could emerge in either democratic or authoritarian forms and that, if we wanted a democratic socialism, we should follow his prescriptions. He insisted that democracy be defined as a method or a process, not in terms of idealized ultimate ends or goals. His oft-quoted central sentence is worth repeating here:

"The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."

¹"Democratic" is used in the conventional sense, one which associates the term with liberal western states having more than one political party.

²Nothing, especially a dominant theory, can be identified so precisely as this implies; Schumpeter, of course, does not stand as the sole author. This may only reflect a trend in the US to identify academic achievements in terms of foreign-born scholars who end up at Harvard University. Academics on both sides of the Atlantic, however, tend to agree with his overall summary statements.

Since 1942, when Schumpeter published Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, the theory has served as a point of departure for those attempting to measure with precision the extent to which a given society is or is not democratic. That is to say, a society could be considered democratic if élites, defined in the broadest of terms as the leaders of organized groups, had relatively free access to the competitive struggle for votes.³ Thus, the theory had no difficulty in accommodating the conventional notions of pluralism, political parties, and pressure group activity. The theory, moreover, outlined a marketplace approach to political competition, individual citizens being accorded the "right" to choose between the packaged programs, products, and candidates offered by the oligopoly of political parties. Taking off from this base point, those who used the Schumpeter model insisted, on their part, that they were conducting empirical, value-free research into the nature of democratic governance. Through an almost inadvertent and circuitous reasoning process, they came to conclude that a number of western governments, in particular those in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the U.S., conformed to Schumpeter's "description" of democratic process, and they implied that the theory not only was an outline of the functioning

³This is not to imply that this use of the word "élite" carries with it the connotation of class structures per se, or social superiority. The word is used here to define those who "lead" any group; thus, in the U.S., a black politician who becomes mayor of an urban community, as in Cleveland or Newark, e.g., is, by definition, a member of the élite, in that he is leader of at least one political party as well as being the formal executive head of the local government.

of democratic government as it is, but as it ought to be. There became attached to the theory the notions that we in the west truly had discovered the workable model of democracy and that our major task was to discover in detail how and why it had emerged so we could preserve it. It is worth noting reasons why the theory became one directed at "freezing" democracy in its existing state.

For one thing, the influence of European refugee scholars has been enormous, and they indeed have made contributions far beyond anything proportionate to their numbers. They have dominated Political Science and Sociology for some years, not to mention Mathematics and Physics. It is no criticism of them to assert that much of their thinking has been dominated by the notion that western countries must at all costs avoid the twin dangers of Stalinist Communism and Hitler/Mussolini Fascism. On that score, they have seen themselves and have been seen as experts in avoidance strategies. Secondly, the dominant theory proved attractive to liberals attracted to positive, welfare, or socialist models, and to conservatives committed to preserving free enterprise. Thirdly, the theory was most attractive to those searching for a "scientific" approach to political analysis. Voting behavior, the degree of citizen participation in elections, the relationship of issues to voting patterns, the functioning of interest groups, all seemed open to dispassionate hypothesis formulation, data collection, analysis, and evaluation. For all these reasons and others, then, the overriding objective was stable democracy; this was seen as providing a reasonable degree of liberty, enough access to power and influence, and enough continuity to make empirical research meaningfully productive.

As Schumpeter fleshed out his own description of democracy and as others added to it, important corollary propositions emerged. Even though few democratic theorists subscribed literally to all of them, they constituted a trend which heavily influenced political behavior and which also pointed up contradictions inherent in the theory itself -- especially when it was necessary to face tough operational questions. Some of these are worth brief analysis:

1. Schumpeter, more than other theorists, argued that participation should be limited to voting itself. The only permissible device through which citizens could control elected officials was the electoral process. Pluralist and other group theories of democracy never incorporated this feature, but it is safe to say that a satisfactory norm never has been found for dealing with the issue of influence. If it is commonly accepted that the citizen has some right to advise elected officials as to his or her desires on any given policy matter, overactivity by aggregated constituencies remains under the heading of "excessive lobbying". After all, the theory argues that the elected official is individually responsible and accountable to voters, on a periodic basis, for how he exercises his judgment; if a given policy turns out unsuccessful, elected officials are to be "blamed" for it, even if their constituents advised its adoption.

2. The theory elevated apathy to the status of a primary value. It was assumed that many citizens, indeed the majority, were incapable of defining their own best interests and, more to the point, did not behave rationally on many occasions. To depend upon collectivized rationality, therefore, was to open the door

to authoritarianism, in that dictators could argue that their programs was based upon an impossible-to-achieve will of the people. It was important to insure enough competition between political parties and other groups to provide meaningful alternatives, even if individuals were beguiled by the clever packaging and advertising produced by the parties. Stability, moreover, required that not too many people become deeply involved in the political process itself. In order to completely "get out the vote", a society would have to use authoritarian methods, and it was significant that the highest percentages of voting occurred in totalitarian societies. Many people of low socioeconomic status, moreover, had been "proved" through "sound" research to have authoritarian attitudes and, should they become too involved, it was thought government would become less democratic. Thus fifty percent turnouts in stable democracies was seen as being about right, a contradiction that continues to bedevil contemporary theorists. As the right to vote became acknowledged as the fundamental political right, it was seen necessary to insure that citizens restricted from voting by poll taxes, literacy tests, property qualifications, sex, race, or age, be granted the fundamental franchise, despite warnings that mass plebiscite could lead to mass stampede.

3. The administrative corollary to the contemporary theory sometimes has been termed "overhead democracy". All significant policy decisions are to be made by elected officials, then carried out through clear lines of command and authority which must exist

throughout the administrative structure. While many theorists of administration have argued that it is impossible to separate "politics" and "administration", the dominant theory, to which the same administrative theorists subscribe (if vaguely), hold that "politics" (or policy) and "administration" are indeed separable. Even where it is admitted and/or argued that administrators have wide discretion in the implementation of policy, this is to be exercised only within parameters carefully drawn by legislators; more to the point, except for unusual circumstances, the individual citizen can do nothing about unfavorable decisions except to elect another set of officials; the notion of "administrative due process" is an insufficient remedy. The dominant theory, in other words, compels the creation of hierarchical structures which face citizens with a paradox they find difficult to understand. They are told that the power of the ballot is "supreme", but they are reminded day-to-day in their dealings with public agencies that the "chain of command" forces them to "take orders" from administrators. All of this emphasis upon hierarchy, moreover, fit nicely with other empirical research which seemed to "prove" that hierarchy is inevitable in all large-scale organized activities.

4. The dominant theory has assumed quietly that liberal democratic governments are "limited" governments, whether socialist or capitalist. The notion has been that government activities should be the minimum consonant with the preservation of order. Within that framework, individuals and organizations should be left free to pursue, with considerable autonomy, their own definitions of self-interest. As

societies became more complex, it was understood that individuals and organizations pursuing their interests might find themselves in collision with others pursuing contradictory interests; the government then would step in, perhaps "referee" the competition, and strike a new balance of power among competing interests. In some way or another, the "public interest" would emerge as the definable outcome of the competitive struggle and government intervention. Theories of democratic socialism never have departed from this approach. For the most part, socialists have been content to nationalize major industries, to not specify in detail exactly how far a socialist approach ultimately might have to go, and to leave generally untouched a competitive framework based upon self-interest. The contradiction inherent to the approach is enormous, if largely unarticulated. Contemporary democratic theory has concentrated on the governance of large social units such as provinces and nation-states. Yet nobody, with the possible exception of the chief of state standing at the top of the pyramid, is presumed to have the duty or obligation of defining the interests of the community as a whole.

In intellectual terms, the dominant political theory, now under remitting attack from many directions, is no better or worse than other social science theories dependent upon empirical analysis. Its values, even its emphasis upon process, have been more implicit than explicit, and its concentration on measuring things already gone by have left it dangerously unable to look to the future; predictions, by definition, have been extrapolations of the past. Any substantial change was unlikely to be predictable at all, and it comes as no surprise that when substantial change began, as it has, the theory

could not cope with it. Indeed, those addicted to empirical theories to such a degree that they assume that all important variables are known and are being measured, seem to shy away from questioning basic assumptions and premises.

It would have been expecting too much for practitioners of liberal democracy (elected officials and appointed administrators) to lead the way toward truly fundamental change, for this would have required them to contradict their expected behavior. The design of democratic systems is such that élites, whether elected officials, appointed administrators, or leaders of interest groups, are expected to engage in the pluralist struggle for power. With each individual and group seeking to maximize its self-interest, each finds it impossible to be the first to abdicate its position of strength, out of fear that competitors will seize the advantage. It is no surprise, then, that truly fundamental change became a possibility only when the perspectives of those outside the competitive power struggle were brought to bear. Those who defined and operated the system became uncomfortably aware that the democratic system was somewhat less democratic than they had assumed, and that many citizens, for reasons persuasive to them, perceived themselves as being on the "outside".

II. THE ORIGINS OF THE THRUST TOWARD EMPLOYEE AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The origins of the drive for "participation" are many and they range from revised theories produced by academics to the involvement of poorly educated citizens in mass demonstrations. No adequate catalog of "reasons" will be available for many years, and maybe never, but some of the influences at work are these:

1. The inevitable growth of "positive government" or "welfare statism" produces ever-increasing involvement of government in all activities which affect all individuals. This already has gone beyond anything conceptualized by old-line socialists, let alone those devoted to laissez-faire government, and it is impossible to predict yet where or if a new line will be drawn. "Interdependence" is the word which best describes the entire range of organized activity, a notion which demands in turn, that every decision in every organization be made in terms of its consequences. One does not have to be a disciple of psychologist B. F. Skinner to conclude that autonomy is disappearing. In the so-called private sector, a large number of companies in a competitive market rely upon various forms of government support and regulation for their existence; the small number of companies in an oligopoly are de facto partners of government, for no society can permit large-scale economic enterprises to go out of business. As John Kenneth Galbraith has put it, we may soon look back with a smile to the time when we regarded large industries as "private" enterprises. The most likely prediction is that every organized activity, especially the provision of all necessary subsistence services for citizens, will be recognized as a community responsibility. In common-sense terms, no mechanism designed to cope with only a few activities will be able to manage everything.

This imposes an immediate additional dilemma, for most of us are approaching the problem with outdated language. Realizing that politicians can deal only with so many issues at a time and convinced that insufficient attention is being given certain issues, individuals and organizations tend to proliferate interest group activity; there is almost an emerging trend toward the creation of additional political parties, "splinter parties" if you will, each the equivalent of a single-issue group. Unless we begin to look for new models of governance, relatively stable two-party systems may fragment into historically unstable multi-party systems. The point is that individuals and groups seek participation to insure that somebody deals with issues which concern them.

2. The immediate corollary is that elected and appointed officials are suffering from the "overload factor," a point repeatedly emphasized by the COGP. Ministers seem unable to cope with the details of everything assigned them but, as reorganization studies try to resolve the problem within existing theories, the inevitable trend is to create additional echelons or tiers of administration which, in turn, move ministers and other officials further away from the citizens themselves. Further, the proliferation of departments seems to some students of administration to dilute the ability of a parliament to perform its necessary function. One scholar, writing in the Canadian Journal of Public Administration, expressed concern that the back benchers of the governing party could not adequately influence the executive if as many as one-third of the party were assigned posts as ministers; broadly speaking, this situation exists now in Ontario. This encourages the view that outside participation is necessary.

3. Whether the present era is one of fundamental cultural revolution

will not be known for some time, but it seems to be. It matters not whether it is underway in one country more than in others, nor that we cannot describe all its dimensions. A number of people are trying to do this, as attested by such titles as Future Shock, The Greening of America, Without Marx or Jesus, and Beyond the Stable State. In a telling sentence, one scholar has admitted with respect that the most capable forecasters have been "unaccredited prophets, seers, poets, preachers, and metaphysicians." The rate of change, much of it based upon recurrent technological revolutions, is greater than ever, making it impossible for an individual to live a lifetime within a single set of values. Springing up all around are youth cultures, counter cultures, existentialism in operation, and other personalistic lifestyles. These rely upon experience as a basis for thought and action, an orientation to the "here and now," a view of existence as process, a search for meaningful involvement, a tendency to question and confront, an inner direction and autonomy, a concern for and acceptance of others, non-competitive and non-exploitive relationships, rejection of exclusively economic and technical social goals, acceptance of social guilt for poverty, and, as much of the world discovers nationalism for the first time, a growing rejection of it in western countries.

Despite the tendency of societies and organizations to resist change, new and different social norms are being legitimized implicitly every day. Peaceful large-scale demonstrations are widely accepted as being within permissible boundaries, even if cities are partly paralyzed in the process. Serious books are written on the benefits of having mental patients participate in governing the institutions in which they live. We are close

to prisoner self-government. An Ontario Deputy Minister for Education openly admits that "we should not let rules and regulations stand in the way" of innovative proposals for multipurpose school structures that would violate existing statutes.

A cultural revolution as deep as this one sets loose its own contradictions. The phenomena of mass demonstrations, threatened violence and extreme language contradict certain features of the emerging culture, especially its tendency to reject exploitation, aggression, and competition. The phenomena, indeed, are much more the property of the old culture, the only one we can describe in reasonably precise detail. Thus, groups seek power and control when the culture they grope for might deny the usefulness of either concept. We see young and old, of whatever race, unable to decide whether they are accepted or rejected by society, confused as to which feeling they should have. Trends are important, and it may be helpful that despite the problems of newer religious approaches, they seem preferable to what now may be a shrinking drug culture. The paradox is that individuals may not be able to choose between autonomy and interdependence at a time when both must be accentuated as never before. To compel people to exist autonomously is to compel isolation and, ultimately, to forcibly reject them. People feel this, and they are groping for participative models.

4. Political theorists are beginning to redesign democratic theory itself. Participation in decision processes, along the lines of "classical" democracy is seen as vital to society:

a. Participation is educative. Citizens involved in decision processes learn the skills necessary for continued participation. One cannot learn to participate without doing so, and this makes it unjust to exclude citizens because of a lack of skills. Further, as citizens acquire the

skills, they continually improve the processes themselves. The more they participate, the better at it they become, and the entire sequence might be described as "positive feedback". To fulfill the function, of course, participation must be attempted, and society itself must become an "open classroom".

b. Participation is integrative. The inclusion of individuals in decision processes which affect them forces them to take into account the interests of others. Individuals gradually expand their perspectives, first beyond the boundaries of their individual interests, then beyond the interests of their organizations. This offers the hope that everyone could develop some notion of community interest.

c. Participation facilitates the acceptance of decisions. Individuals are likely to accept decisions when they know they influenced them, and they are more likely to feel a deep responsibility for those decisions.

5. Taken together, these factors present political élites with cultural, theoretical, administrative, and activist demands to respond. Up to now, most political responses have occurred only in a reactive mode, as an outcome of threats, demonstrations, and other types of near-violence. As one Toronto editorial writer puts it, however, politicians themselves already are "groping toward some new form of government." They are taking on a proactive stance, attempting to create, innovate, facilitate the emergence of new forms.

Politicians have difficulty describing the future, for their importance to the existing system encourages overemphasis of the importance of those roles in the future. There are even dangers that in attempting to be truly

creative, politicians who seek to modernize the system could destroy themselves. If individual citizens did register their opinions on each issue through the use of electronic home-voting consoles, this would enable legislators to know their constituents' desires, but it also might leave legislators in a position similar to that of the U. S. Electoral College; once a body whose members voted their personal preferences for President, it now merely ratifies the popular vote.

6. All the above reasons are both causes and effects of the rising level of education in the citizenry. Not only do people undergo more formal education than ever before, but they are exposed to much more than that. As they watch the world unfold on their television screens and observe the activities of teeming millions around them, they gradually become aware that the existing system permits them only to observe, not to become involved. They virtually are bursting with partial knowledge, and they realize that knowledge can be expanded and made fulfilling only by an opportunity to use it.

7. Finally, there is a potential reason which may turn out to be the most startling of all. Participation probably is the most efficient and cost-effective manner of making decisions. While conventional wisdom argues that participation slows down decision processes, adds to the overall cost and design of implementation, and introduces a host of irrelevant factors, participation may do precisely the opposite. Most decision-making studies never examine the costs of overcoming consequences not foreseen in advance. There can be no better way of discovering these unforeseen consequences, long a major problem of administration, than by involving in the decision processes those likely to be affected by them. A slower decision can become economical over the

long term. Participation, in other words, may be cost-effective through cost-avoidance, something that may be widely accepted in a few years. Indeed, Toronto and Ontario may provide a classic example of this phenomenon; it is a fair guess that whatever the ultimate fate of the Spadina Expressway, the outcome will demonstrate the validity of this proposition.

Taken together, the listing suggests the participation is inevitable, it is desirable on many grounds, and that all of us must discover the forms it should take. For reasons outlined in Section I, the existing political process may not offer viable solutions. These are emerging in "administrative" environments, in both public and private sectors.

III. TRENDS TOWARD PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Most administrative theories, including recent ones considered innovative, do not depart from classical hierarchical approaches. Most theorists and practitioners view themselves as working in an area which does not challenge the preserve of politicians; even when they speculate about "democratic" administrative techniques, they assume policy boundaries are set above them. Exciting things are happening in administration nonetheless, because this is where the action is; citizens and employees are affected by decisions made by administrators exercising their discretionary authority, and most contact between citizen and government is at that point where agencies do their business. Because that point is significant to the individual citizen, it is where change must be effected. Before outlining the trends, one dysfunctional proposal must be rejected.

Much is made these days of the experiment underway in Yugoslavia, the device of workers' management of industry on a plant-by-plant basis. Some of those enamored of the Yugoslav experience are among the political theorists mentioned earlier who have argued convincingly that voting in elections does not satisfy the needs of participation. Because academic political scientists know no other form of governance, however, they contradict themselves by asking that industrial workers elect councils to manage their plants. This decentralized socialism is rejected here because: (1) it clings to electoral models; (2) it emphasizes self-interest and the interest of the individual plant, thus forcing workers in each plant to view as enemies the workers in competing plants; and

(3) evidence already available in Yugoslavia indicates that worker councils, under the pressure of competition, behave toward workers and other plants in the same manner as capitalist managers. No, electoral models will not help us, even if they require individuals to enter voting booths every day, push voting buttons every night, or subject themselves daily to the oppressive rituals of Roberts' Rules of Order. What follows is a brief listing of recent developments which seem to be setting the stage for participation.

1. The Multiorganizational or "Temporary" Approach. This owes much to a theory that administrators work in "open" systems which include an infinite number of variables, patterns, and influences, beyond anything comprehended within a single organization. Because social purposes cannot be achieved through the efforts of single organizations, we must begin to look at multiorganizational complexes. Warren Bennis, a famous student of administration, has made famous "temporary problem-solving organizations," something which includes such other terms as "project," "matrix," and "task force" organizations. Individual professionals from many organizations pool their talents in collegial ways, no one of them clearly in "command" of the others. Each individual is, in other words, a member of at least two organizations, the permanent organization which employs him, and the temporary one formed to solve a particular problem. The exciting thing is that multiorganizational processes surround the solving of all problems, and that the interaction between multiorganizational members is collegial and non-hierarchically interactive. Admittedly, some confusion exists, for some of these organizations tend to be oriented toward accomplishment of

specific tasks while others emphasize processes, members admitting that objectives remain to be defined. The process version is more participative.

This approach has not yet been extended beyond expert professionals, but it encourages face-to-face interactive problem-solving. As we study the phenomenon, we can see that the collegial process is tending to influence the conduct of the permanent organizations more than the latter do the former. As we look closely at democratic governments, Cabinet committees, and especially problem-oriented sub-committees, are a version of this approach that parliamentary governments have used for some time. The important thing is not who is "in charge" of the process, but that the appropriate departments and associated expertise are included. In simpler terms, the entire approach is only an operationalization of organizational interdependency, something clearly recognized by the COGP.

2. The "Organizational Development" Approach. This includes everything from "T-groups" to "encounter," "laboratory," "experiential," and "sensitivity" training, and combines behavioral science with an attempt to develop in individuals the facilitative skills for working within a dynamic process. The approach assumes that employees should function in collaborative ways, should be honest, open, and trusting with each other, and that organizations themselves should enable individuals to realize their potential as humans. Drawing upon the work of McGregor, Argyris, and others, the approach rejects the assumption that individuals work only for economic rewards which they enjoy elsewhere, and adopts the notion that the work itself must be fulfilling, and to all employees.

As practiced thus far, the approach does not go far. "OD" is restricted to professional administrators in business and government. The training "consultant" focuses on the single organization and actually overlooks the multiorganizational processes outlined above. In so doing, the authority of the top administrator is reinforced, for he hires the consultant and defines the objectives. The concentration on "personal skills" can sweep under the concealing rug of good manners some tough institutional and intramural conflicts. Yet, this is another forward step, and an "OD consultant" might be used to facilitate the internal dynamics of high-level policy processes, e.g., Cabinet and sub-Cabinet committees.

Sooner or later, these approaches will extend to lower levels. Continuing re-analysis of previous experience is showing that industrial workers and employees at the lowest levels perform better and realize more satisfaction when they participate in the design of the work itself. This does not mean that all employees should have "sensitivity" training; much of it turns out to be disillusioning. The encouraging of facilitative skills and participative management is better handled at the work place, not at exotic sessions which impel individuals to reveal too much of themselves at too fast a pace. Until hierarchical rules of the game undergo further revision, employees can be punished by superiors who choose to use for that purpose what they learn about the employees.

3. The "Citizen Participation" Approach. It is only a few years since "maximum feasible participation" was memorialized as the dawn of a new era. While many attempts have been made to discover effective models of citizen participation, they have not progressed beyond versions of citizen "advice", because it remains assumed that elected and

appointed officials retain responsibility and undivided authority for decisions. The examples mentioned here center on urban areas, though it is worth remembering that a form of self-regulation has been enjoyed by U. S. farmers for many years. Because it emphasizes the autonomy of farming interests, the U. S. model is not truly a participative one. Indeed, the experience is held up by opponents as an example of the disastrous consequences of participation.

The "advocacy" concept, traceable to urban planning, provides community groups with professional planners who draw up alternative plans for urban development. The U. S. federal government, for example, has funded the establishment of "advocacy planning offices", the members of which then negotiate contracts with urban groups. Out of this come plans which are competitors of the plans developed by city planning agencies. The national government, in other words, finances the preparation of plans which contradict those of local government authorities. While the notion of "counterplans" may seem attractive to many, this adversary approach is rejected here. Quite aside from the political intricacies involved, which are serious enough, the process takes on a "win-lose" posture in which neighborhood groups are bound to feel defeated unless their plans are accepted as drawn; similarly, local authorities feel they "lose face" if their plans are discarded.

The word "charrette" is traceable to schools of architecture involved in urban design, who borrowed the word from the competition at the Beaux Arts in France. In one version of the "charrette", citizens, administrators, police chiefs, and other interested groups confront each other in large auditoriums, let off steam, then attempt to outline in detail the issues at stake. Sub-groups then develop new programs. A

more sophisticated version has involved residents, community organizations, consulting architects and educators, university students, and neighborhood children in the design of new educational centers which can be used as multifunctional structures. This is a long -- often six months or more -- and tortuous process which demands of participants stamina and patience. Exciting ideas have evolved however, as in suggestions that a school cafeteria become a neighborhood restaurant at night, that day-care centers be included, that health facilities be added for all citizens, that playgrounds be designed on roofs so as to save space. These examples include several from the U.S. and from the Kensington School design in Toronto. Even militant groups such as the Black Panthers have been drawn into the process in New York City.

These examples have resulted in detailed plans which are forwarded only as recommendations to administrators and school boards. So far as is known, these officials have yet to declare themselves a part of the design process. The evolution is underway nonetheless; when a community group of 150 to 200 people designs individual rooms and activity centers, subgroups solving conflicts with other subgroups as they occur, something new is happening. It seems fair to predict that school officials will involve themselves at earlier points in the process, for that will be the only way they can retain much influence at all. They dare not reject outright designs produced in this manner.

Many urban redevelopment programs have been designed this way, with extensive interaction between planners, builders, business groups, and other interests. These become governing systems of their own even if they have been dominated by prominent business men who have not been

concerned with extensive involvement of the citizens in neighborhoods being redeveloped.

Taken together, these trends encourage horizontal and vertical extension of participative management across and within organizations, they break new paths toward citizen involvement, and they attend to the human skills used in participative undertakings. Taken as a whole, they include contradictions and gaps that remain to be worked out, principally by using all three approaches at the same time.

IV. THE IMPLICATIONS OF ADOPTING PARTICIPATION AS A NORM

This is a tentative exploration of the implications of participative management and citizen participation . This is not a prediction of the social values that ultimately may emerge; it is an attempt to outline issues that seem likely to arise. Most of those arguing for participation have yet to face these implications, perhaps because they would frighten both advocates and opponents. They are purposely inserted here before proceeding to operational suggestions.

1. The cultural revolution suggests that participation and competition are not compatible concepts. One proposal made these days is that citizens be able to choose between alternative services offered by competing public agencies. Yet, individual citizens cannot expect to involve themselves in the design of public service delivery systems while withholding commitment to use the systems designed. To put it another way, one cannot plan separate systems without having a clear idea of the total "market" for the services themselves. The cultural revolution ultimately may call into question all forms of competitive behavior, including the economic arena. Those who advocate worker management models in industry, for example, surely should see it would make no sense to transform workers at Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler into enemies of each other. Participation may suggest participatively managed monopolies, shocking as that may seem.

2. All organizational designs of the future will be ambiguous, in that positions will become more temporary, structures will change quite often; constant re-analysis will reshape processes almost daily. This seems frightening, but it need not be, provided that the end of a temporary assignment does not throw the individual out of work. The individual's survival and personal economic health may have to be disassociated from his immediate job. This flouts conventional wisdom, but it is clear that fear is not the greatest motivator. All one needs to deal with ambiguity, moreover, is a realization that everyone else faces it also; what makes it frightening is the feeling that others do not face it.

3. Each individual will become more a generalist than specialist, the reversal of a long-term trend. While the individual will not participate extensively in everything affecting him, he will be involved in a number of things -- and in detail, as in the school design experiences.

4. For both public and private agencies, there will be fundamental changes in concepts of responsibility, accountability, and authority. As it becomes clear that responsibility and accountability are "sharing" and "collective" notions, the notion of the autonomous hierarchical manager gradually will vanish. It is no accident that the leading executive placement consultants in the New York corporate community already note that managerial salaries are no longer rising because of presumed risks in the business world. With the government openly acknowledged as a partner who guarantees success, the manager has no claim to high pay.

5. If citizen involvement is to replace voting, the roles of legislators and other elected officials will change. If they are no longer to be those "on top" who set policy for the rest of us, what will they do? A preliminary suggestion is that for some considerable period, the legislator will find much to do as an ombudsman, catalyst, or expediter, providing access for individual citizens with problems to solve. This has happened in the U.S., since legislators spend up to 3/4 of their time doing this; while this seems to detract from their lawmaking duties, the expediting role may become the principal one. If parliamentary systems, as in Canada, should find it easier to adapt to collective policy-making than U.S.-type systems, the individual MP or MPP may find it more difficult to function as an expediter for constituents.

6. The collective sharing of responsibility and the awareness of interdependence ultimately may challenge individual ownership of property. This will differ from old-line socialist notions of "worker ownership". The new trend may be toward totally collective ownership, or "all of us own everything".

7. Temporary problem-solving systems will threaten the dominance, if not the permanency, of all formal organizations, not excluding the state. As the state becomes redefined again in terms of "community", as opposed to a government apparatus "above" the community, we may see nation-states in entirely new ways. There already are powerful organizations largely outside the influence of any nation-state, the multinational corporations. We shall have to look for mechanisms to cope with the corporations on a global basis. When the New York Times editorial page carries an article entitled

"Farewell to the Nation-State," something is in the wind. Even if one looks at such problems as pollution and population control, however, it is clear that sovereignty may give way before the necessity of dealing with the problems.

None of this is intended to argue that these trends will materialize in all of their frightening or fulfilling glory at any time in the very near future. Above all is it not suggested that any government should take immediate steps to implement one of these possibilities.

V. THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF PARTICIPATION

As implied throughout, attention should be placed on policy processes, decision-making processes, and administrative processes, for these are more important than electoral processes. Conceptually, this should be easier to handle in a parliamentary system; in addition to the collective tradition of cabinet government, the day-to-day policy process occurs before issues reach the floor of Parliament. In any democratic government, of course, the vast majority of policy-making occurs within the statutes already in force. Despite the wide range of issues explored in this study, implementation of further participation should be on a gradual basis, one which does not encourage wholesale and immediate restructuring. The things already considered by the COGP indicate that substantial change is inevitable, so complete standpattism is out of the question. One specific recurring issue, constantly under consideration, illustrates how participation might solve otherwise intractable problems.

As this is written, 22 of 69 members of the majority party in Ontario fill ministerial positions; it has been suggested that some number of these ministers, say 10 or 15, should be assigned assistants who also are MPPs. The issue comes up repeatedly because of the vast amount of business which requires a minister's attention; yet, to assign so many MPPs to executive positions gradually would include almost every member of the majority party. There is no escape from the dilemma, for politicians feel they must "control" ministries. A participatory process, one which included citizens and administrators every step of the way, could lead to reasonable forms of decentralization.

Conceptually, any new approaches, at whatever levels, depend upon gradual acceptance of the premise that political and administrative policy-makers simply must involve subordinates (employees and citizens) as a matter of fundamental right. This means, for example, that at each point where the organizational chart now indicates that a single individual is responsible, we begin to visualize a collective decision process, not necessarily restricted to government officials. Such processes should be structured as nearly as possible in conformance with what we know about effective small-group decision-making, using as target figures numbers between say, five and twelve individuals. What might this explicitly mean at several levels of government?

The Provincial Level

Cabinet committees and sub-committees are a historic and useful point of departure. As outlined in COGP Interim Report Number Two, the concept of "Coordinating Committees" best fits the traditional notion of sub-Cabinet committees, and it operationalizes the notion of problem-solving processes. Committees charged with policy and priority, legislation, coordination, and management seem somewhat more dubious.⁴ In dealing with the problems assigned them, sub-committees (coordinating sub-committees in COGP thinking) should use on a day-to-day basis the functional staff expertise of the departments themselves, thus increasing interdepartmental interaction and involvement at all levels. There is no reason to avoid more use of "outsiders" especially interested in specific

⁴ Committees formed in this manner seem, in fact, to be committees charged with sub-processes, each committee, of necessity, having to deal in detail with virtually every problem of government.

problems in the work of sub-committees and attached sub-groups, including the opposition party. This might include citizen and other nongovernmental groups (the COGP is a government process which includes nongovernment people, and there seems little reason not to expand such processes). None of this seems very different from the way in which these processes have been expanding in the past, as outlined in Interim Report Number One. The added emphasis here is in these directions:

1. Ministers and/or Parliamentary Assistants might serve on a number of sub-committees, preferably on those attempting to solve problems which are indicative of competing interests or priorities. This tends to loosen up the entire structure by permitting many senior officials to serve on bodies which, if kept completely autonomous and separate, would be in direct competition with each other.

2. Committees and sub-committees might meet periodically with higher level officials, including the Prime Minister, to insure that the program being developed is corrected along the way. When the sub-committee finishes its work, the result should be a program in being -- not merely a recommendation.

3. Committees and sub-committees gradually might be redesigned so as to be "split-level" in structure, i.e., they should comprise officials from two or three levels of the hierarchy, not be composed only of people from a single level. This is another way of looking at the suggestion in #2 above.

4. The conventional temptation to establish a "tiered ministry system" or "superministers" might be avoided. These reinforce the self-interest approach; each minister is impelled to overemphasize the autonomous interests of his department or, if he is responsible for a group of ministries, the interests of those departments, while assuming that someone else is responsible for all other interests. Contrary to expectations, moreover, this form of overhead multiplication tends to accomplish the opposite of what is intended; instead of freeing those at the top from making a number of decisions, the tendency is for everything to be pushed upward. In the U.S., for example, the "superdepartments" in New York City and the evolution of the Department of Defense have led to precisely this outcome, because the added layer of decision authority (in the Ontario case, it would be the minister charged with "coordinating" several departments⁵) cannot accept full personal responsibility for resolving conflicts and must, therefore, send them up. Finally, such a system might threaten Cabinet government, in that it chips away at the premise of collective responsibility.

5. If the COGP itself brings "outsiders" within governmental policy processes, then it would not be a large step to imagine government officials involved in nongovernmental policy processes.

⁵The word "coordination" often is used to imply that the structure being created is not a vertical one, in the traditional sense. It usually is made clear, however, that "coordination" means, in fact, "control", as in the language of COGP Interim Report Number Two wherein it is said that individual department ministers, in a "tiered" system, might "report through" overhead policy ministers.

The Sub-Provincial Level

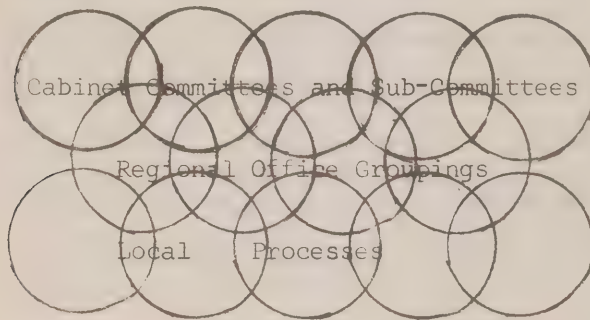
The issue of sub-provincial reorganization of departments seems similar to the U.S. problem of what to do with federal regional offices of the national departments. Ten such centers were designated in 1970; federal agencies were directed to put their regional offices in those cities and to standardize geographical boundaries (each region now covers four to six states). Over time, these offices should become focal points of national-state-local governmental interaction, and perhaps there will evolve a new form of federalist policy-making. What inhibits the process is the feeling that federal regional offices cannot function unless a single official is "in charge" of each office. Yet, no one of the agencies willingly will subordinate itself to another, and there is fear that an official directly assigned to the President (a member of the Office of Management and Budget, for example) could become an important political figure (even a "regional" or "provincial" President) if he made final decisions on budget allocations (admittedly, state-federal interaction is inhibited also by the Constitutional tradition of separation).

The inference to be drawn from COGP Interim Report Number Two is that Ontario faces the same dilemma. There is a feeling that regional offices should be combined, or at least located at the same centers. It seems assumed, however, that this cannot be done unless the offices are under the supervision of "regional ministers". This demonstrates the power of conventional wisdom to provide dilemmas. As in the U.S., no single agency will feel comfortable in a subordinate position to another, and it appears that the designation of regional ministers would create complex new de facto political constituencies.

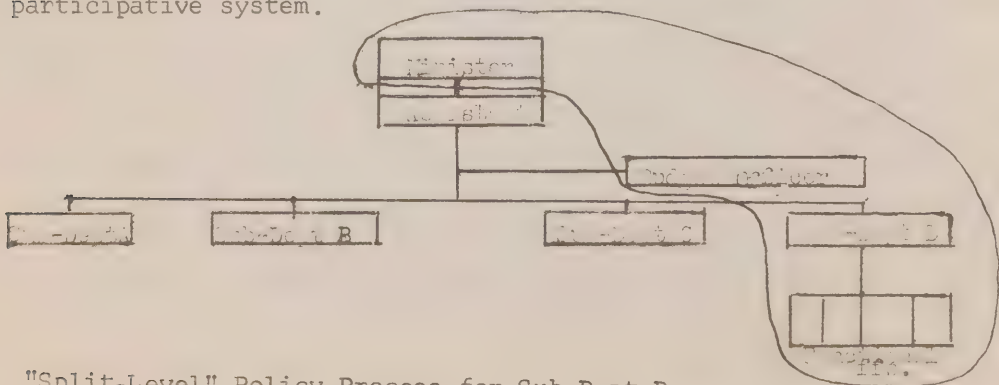
Any participative system for dealing with an area as large as Ontario would have to include regional offices as focal points of interaction. This could be done without designating any individual as "in command" of the collectivity; one device could be someone designated as "administrative chairman", another could be an officer of the secretariat acting as the keeper of the machinery. "Coordination" is possible if it is clear that the "coordinator" or "secretariat" is not equal or superior to members of the office. The regional offices would be two-way influence centers, dealing on the one hand with the committees and other bodies at provincial level and, on the other, with metropolitan governments and other communities at lower levels. They would not have autonomous authority; they would be "linking pins" between local communities and the provincial government. It would be logical, for example, to include local government officials and individual citizens on problem-oriented sub-committees of the regional offices.

If the explanation of such devices as "charrettes" and the school design system in Toronto are recalled, one can visualize a series of collective mechanisms ranging from Cabinet committees in Toronto to local committees in every community in Ontario, all of them explicitly linked together through multiple and overlapping memberships. The province, the sub-provincial region, and the local community provide points of departure for expanding such linkages vertically and horizontally. Information and communications systems then would be elaborated to keep everyone informed about what was going on elsewhere. Multiple memberships are themselves, however, uniquely

effective means of furthering communications and extending influence. If each official, for example, is a member of five interactive processes, if each process contains six other individuals, that official has direct influence on the five processes of which he is a member, and exerts almost direct influence (through each of his colleagues in the five processes) on as many as 150 other processes. If the linkages are not broken, if none of the processes close themselves off, the influence is immense, if not measurable. This is worth charting in broad outline.



A mathematically symmetrical model is unlikely, of course, and should not be attempted; nevertheless, the approach demonstrates just how much opportunity for influence could be available in a participative system.



"Split-Level" Policy Process for Sub-Dept D
Budget (Rensis Likert-type)

The final diagram, drawn in the manner suggested by Rennis Likert, merely outlines one simple approach to a single budgetary decision process within a single department. In arriving at individual decisions, most agencies doubtless use interaction along the lines suggested in the outline. In looking at the process in this way, however, one is encouraged to view the process as a truly collegial interactive one. The conventional way, of course, is to presume that sub-department heads submit recommendations to superior officials who then make binding decisions. To involve at least these three levels in the process, moreover, is to diffuse the notion of formal authority. It follows that any single organization, if so redesigned in explicit ways, would have a large number of such processes; each process, moreover, need not be restricted to formal members of the department.

EPILOGUE

One might conclude that at each decision point in any study of reorganization, the choice often lies between a process that will enhance wider involvement and participation, and one that will not. Sometimes, one choice will tend to neutralize another; sub-committees and a tiered ministry system exemplify potentially neutralizing choices. Yet in times of crisis, participatory processes expand almost without thought. The Churchill-Roosevelt interaction of World War II was supported by an extensive multinational administrative system which emerged almost spontaneously. The current U.S. debate over President's Nixon economic policy processes is an argument about the ground rules of participation, in that nongovernmental bodies will set wages and prices, perhaps or perhaps not subject to official vetoes. Participation may be a "natural" mode of behavior, thrust aside in non-crisis simply because of traditional theories.

The intellectual revolution remains the critical one, and a new mood is needed. While gradualness is preferable, there must be a willingness to experiment, and to admit that some experiments do not work and to abandon them. Traditional politics does not allow this; the politician who admits error is perceived to be arguing he should be replaced. If collective responsibility, already a norm in parliamentary government, can be expanded, perhaps we can come to share both success and blame. If this mood cannot be established, and short of absolute crisis, there is little hope. If it is impossible as yet to design any ultimate model for

participation, it also is impossible to determine in advance if it will work. It may be the case that people are "no damned good". If so, all of us will be the losers.

